Chapter 7 - Self Assessment

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Introduction

1. The self assessment section details the requirements and approach that you should undertake to form judgements on the quality of service that you deliver on all Welfare to Work provision.

High Level Must Dos

- You are required as part of your contract to undertake a self assessment process.

- Your Self Assessment must consider all 11 statements outlined in the DWP provider Self Assessment Tool.

- An initial Self Assessment will be completed six months after contract start and thereafter annually.

- Areas for improvement identified from your Self Assessment should be included within an improvement plan.

- You must make both your Self Assessment and improvement plans available to the Provider Assurance Team (PAT) during their reviews of your provision.

Completing the Self Assessment

2. Continuous Self Assessment is fundamental to driving forward quality improvement. As a condition of your contract you are required by DWP to carry out Self Assessment of all provisions that you are delivering to form a judgement on the quality of the service delivered and how this can be further improved.

3. The DWP provider Self Assessment Tool (SAT) defines a series of 11 statements that must be covered as part of the self-assessment. The SAT will provide a measure of the quality of all provision that is delivered to the participant, the participants experience and statutory requirements. The SAT aide memoir at Annex 1 outlines these statements and provides example evidence sources and related standards.

4. You should be objective and honest in the evaluation of your organisation as a whole. Judgements should be based on clear solid evidence and your Self Assessment should include strengths, areas for improvement and satisfactory areas that can be improved.

5. It is important to remember that Self Assessment and improvement planning is not a one-off activity but should be part of continuous improvement, integrated into regular planning and quality improvement activities.

Format of the Self Assessment

6. DWP is not specifying a format for your self-assessment but you must consider all 11 statements contained in Annex 1 as part of the process.

Evidence to support Self Assessment

7. Throughout the year you should be regularly collecting evidence, such as participant feedback and performance data and evaluating this information as part of your quality improvement arrangements. It is important that systems and processes in place are effective, easy to use and comprehensive. The evidence gathered should then be used to support the grades and judgements you award your provision/s in your Self Assessment.

8. Examples of the type of evidence you could include in your Self Assessment are included in Annex 1.

Making Judgements

9. Once the evidence has been gathered, you should make judgements about your provision/s by considering all aspects of your participants' experience.

10. It is important to ensure standards are consistent throughout your organisation. It is vital you have systems in place to assess consistency across the entire provision/s, including that delivered by sub-contractors.

Grading the Self Assessment

11. Although the Self Assessment should provide an assessment of the quality of provision/s DWP has not defined a particular grading system that should be used. It is for you to decide what grading system best suits your organisation, for example whether a numerical scale or RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rating is used. Regardless of the grading system used the grades should reflect the balance of key strengths and areas for improvement identified. The number of strengths and areas for improvement is not as important as their significance. You should consider the impact of the strengths or areas for improvement on the participant and your performance.

12. It is important you are honest when assessing and grading your provision/s. An accurate reflection of all provision in your self assessment indicates how well you know your business.

Planning for Improvement

13. As a result of the annual Self Assessment, providers will consider what actions will be taken to rectify any weaknesses identified and plans for improving the overall quality of all provision. This will ensure progress towards an overall goal of consistently high quality and responsive delivery to participants. The areas identified for improvement should be included within an improvement plan. DWP has not specified a set format for quality improvement plans and you can therefore decide whether you have a separate quality improvement plan or capture areas identified from the self assessment within existing plans you hold in your organisation.

14. You should prioritise actions by considering what will bring about the most significant improvements, how changes will affect your participants and how long it will take to implement.

15. Actions on your quality improvement plan should also include:

- clear, specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time bound objectives and targets for improvement;

- who is responsible for ensuring the actions are carried out;

- timescales for completion, with milestones where appropriate;

- arrangements for monitoring and reporting on progress; and

- dates when actions are completed and the outcomes achieved.

The Role of DWP in the Self Assessment Process

16. The Self Assessment is for you to use in judging quality of all provision and areas for improvement and there is no requirement to submit this to DWP once completed. Performance Management Division will not use the Self Assessment as part of the regular performance management process and DWP will not use the Self Assessment to benchmark providers in any way.

17. DWP will seek assurance from you that you have undertaken self-assessment, identified improvement actions within plans and these actions are in progress. The Provider Assurance Team (PAT) will have responsibility for undertaking this assurance role during their provider reviews. The PAT will ask to see both the Self Assessment and improvement plans during the course of their reviews.

Consequences of failing to undertake must dos

18. Where you do not meet the must dos in undertaking your Self Assessment this will be reflected in the findings of your PAT assurance report.

Annex 1: Aid memoir to provide some key pointers to consider against each of the 11 quality self-assessment statements

This aid memoir is designed to provide you with some key pointers of what you should be considering against each of the 11 quality self assessment statements. Evidence to support your self assessment should as far as possible be based upon existing information sources, rather than requiring additional evidence gathering. Examples of some potential evidence sources, including related standards that may be applicable are also shown against each statement. This aide memoir should not be seen as a definitive list but illustrative only.

1. There are established processes to identify, collect and measure internal management information to assess performance in achieving results in the progression of participants into work, encouraging participant progression and securing sustainable employment.	
For this statement consider:	**Related standards and potential evidence sources**
- What types of management information are collected by your organisation, what does analysis of this data show and how confident are you in the accuracy of this information. - What processes are in place to measure and encourage participant's progression. - How does trend analysis demonstrate performance has changed over time. - How well action planning with participants identifies personal goals and how regular and effective progress reviews are in assessing progress against agreed actions and achievements. - How well participants are progressing towards securing sustainable employment. - The number of participants who have gained a job. - The number of participants who have sustained a job.	- Providers MI systems - Monthly DWP performance reports - Merlin Standard - Performance Improvement Plans - Notes from Provider Engagement Meetings with Jobcentre Plus - Discussions with DWP Account Managers / Performance Managers - Feedback from Jobcentre Plus - Internal performance reviews
2. Initial assessment identifies the needs and abilities of all participants to ensure the service delivered supports the needs of all individuals.	
For this statement consider:	**Related standards and evidence sources**

- How well individual participant's needs are identified during the induction arrangements. - The flexibility of arrangements to suit participants needs - How provision is planned to provide progression routes for all participants. - Whether goals agreed with participants recognise an individual's starting point and previous experience. - Whether participants are being sufficiently challenged in achieving their goals and making progression.	- Induction material - Initial assessment and diagnostic forms/tools - Individual learning plans - Scope of provision available - The Matrix Standard (Elements 2 & 4) (where the organisation has this accreditation) - Individual action plans - Case notes - Findings from internal quality monitoring

3. There are effective processes and policies in place to review and assess the quality of service and the participant experience on provision.

For this statement consider:	Related standards and evidence sources
- How quality of the service is monitored and evaluated against key performance indicators. - How information, including participant experience and feedback is collected and used to assess the quality of service delivery. - How feedback and information on the quality of service is used to inform the quality self assessment and improvement plans.	- The Matrix Standard (Element 8) (where the organisation has this accreditation) - Findings from quality assurance monitoring systems and procedures - Notes of Provider Engagement Meetings - Participant feedback systems - Quality Assurance Policy and associated guidance

4. Quality assurance activity is monitored and analysed to inform and improve service delivery for the participants.

For this statement consider:	Related standards and evidence sources
- What quality assurance processes your organisation operates. - What quality improvements you have introduced as a result of quality assurance activity identifying weaknesses or areas for improvement. - How results of self assessment have been used to improve service delivery.	- Self Assessment reports and quality improvement plans - Quality Assurance Policy and associated guidance - Merlin Standard - Findings from Annual Security Plan Reviews/Audits. - ISO/IEC27002 & ISO/IEC27001

5. Participant experience is routinely used to identify and implement continuous improvements to the delivery of a quality service through the use of participant complaints and feedback.	
For this statement consider:	**Related standards and evidence sources**
• How participant feedback is gathered. • What changes you have introduced as a result of participant feedback. • What process your organisation has for dealing with participant complaints. • How visible is your complaints procedure to participants.	➢ Participant feedback forms ➢ Number of participant complaints ➢ Participant Complaints ➢ The Matrix Standard (Element 7) (where the organisation has this accreditation) ➢ Feedback from Jobcentre Plus ➢ Collecting, monitoring, evaluating and addressing participant feedback/complaints
6. Staff are in post with the skills and expertise to meet the needs of participants.	
For this statement consider:	**Related standards and evidence sources**
• What induction is provided for staff. • How are staff training needs assessed. • What arrangements are in place to ensure competence and development of all staff involved in delivery of the service? • The experience and qualifications of your staff. • The processes that are in place in monitor and review staff skills and experience, including any observations.	➢ Staff training plans/records and appraisals ➢ Number of staff training days ➢ Investors in People accreditation ➢ Staff Training Needs Assessment ➢ Matrix Standard (Element 6) (where the organisation has this accreditation) ➢ Merlin Standard ➢ Findings from Observations ➢ Recruitment policy
7. The organisation identifies, understands and learns from factors which facilitate or hinder delivery of high quality service provision, verifying and sharing good practices and innovative approaches that have resulted in improved performance results.	
For this statement consider:	**Related standards and evidence sources**
• How do you measure the impact of your actions to improve?	➢ Merlin Standard

• How is good practice shared within your organisation? • What evidence you have of adopting good practice and innovation, including how this has improved performance.	➢ The Matrix Standard (Element 8) (where the organisation has this accreditation) ➢ Merlin Standard (2a) ➢ Internal communications framework ➢ Findings from quality assurance monitoring systems and procedures ➢ Notes of Provider Engagement Meetings with Jobcentre Plus ➢ Participant feedback systems ➢ Quality Assurance Policy and associated guidance ➢ Self Assessment reports and quality improvement plans

8. Policy and processes are operating effectively to ensure the safeguarding of vulnerable groups

For this statement consider:	Related standards and evidence sources
• How you can demonstrate that there are policies and procedures in place to meet statutory requirements for the safeguarding of vulnerable groups. • Whether participants are aware of the complaints route, including how reporting and investigating issues take place. • How do you know that participants feel safe?	➢ Merlin Standard ➢ Safeguarding policy ➢ Staff training

9. There is effective operation of policy and processes to promote the Health and Safety of participants and ensure compliance with Health and Safety legislation

For this statement consider:	Related standards and evidence sources
• What policies and procedures are in place to meet the statutory requirements. • Your effectiveness with compliance with health and safety regulations.	➢ Merlin Standard ➢ Providers Health & Safety policy ➢ Internal Health & Safety audits/inspections ➢ Risk assessments ➢ Induction

• How well health and safety is promoted, including feedback from participants on how safe they perceive their environment. • How participants are made aware of health & safety issues. • The complaints route for participants, how this is publicised and way that issues are reported and investigated.	➢ Health & safety feedback from participants

10. There is evidence of compliance with Equal Opportunities Legislation and attaining results across a diverse range of participant groups

For this statement consider:	Related standards and evidence sources
• The policies and procedures you have in place to meet statutory requirements. • What complaints route is in place for participants, including how reporting and investigating issues takes place. • How do you collect feedback from participants to gain their perception on how equality and diversity is promoted? • How do you monitor and promote equality and diversity. • What equality and diversity data is collected and how is this analysed and used to meet participant's needs.	➢ Equality & Diversity Policy ➢ Merlin Standard ➢ Provider MI ➢ Cohort analysis ➢ Equality impact and analysis/measures ➢ Equal opportunities impact assessments ➢ Staff training/awareness ➢ Participant feedback ➢ Recognised awards: positive about disability; committed to equality; diversity assured accreditation

11. There is evidence of compliance with contract requirements relating to sustainable development

For this statement consider:	Related standards and evidence sources
• When you last reviewed your sustainable development policy and plan. • What progress has been made?	➢ Sustainable Development Policy and Plan

Annex 2: Effective Self-Assessment

Effective Self Assessment

1. Effective Self Assessment is a comprehensive process through which you evaluate all of your provision/s, including any elements delivered by sub-contractors. It is an integral activity as you gather evidence throughout the year and monitor how well you are meeting agreed targets and reconsider strategies for achieving your goals.

2. Self Assessment is:

   ● a continuous process to improve the quality of all provision;

   ● is representative of everything that you deliver, looking across the range of provision delivered;

   ● an assessment of strengths and areas for improvement;

   ● the focus to identify and implement quality improvements; and

   ● an essential aspect of quality improvement.

3. A self-critical and objective process of Self Assessment will enable you to identify:

   ● strengths to build upon;

   ● satisfactory areas that can be improved; and

   ● areas for improvement that require immediate action.

   ● As a general guide:

   ● include an overview of areas that have improved and areas still requiring improvement; and

   ● provide either cross references/signposting to where appropriate evidence and data can be found or give sufficient evidence including relevant data, to support judgements.

Evidence to support Self Assessment

4. It is important to include brief references to information/evidence to support the strengths and areas for improvement you have identified. This could include feedback from participants, employers and other 3rd parties, including sub-contractors. Methods used to gather this

information could include questionnaires, focus groups/workshops and an effective complaints procedure. You should obtain regular feedback to identify the needs and satisfaction levels of your participants, including those who are leaving/have left all provision.

5. Your annual Self Assessment review should bring together a summary of your findings. The narrative should include evaluative judgements to support the strengths or areas for improvement identified, stating the evidence on which this is based and sign-posting to detailed records held within your organisation.

6. Your Self Assessment should include brief but effective use of **analysed** data and management information. It should contain sufficient statistics to support judgements regarding participants' achievements, performance and overall strengths and areas for improvement for your provision/s.

7. Evidence gathered should be:

   - reliable, include a range of different types and gathered from various sources;

   - valid and adequately support the judgements made;

   - accurate and from verifiable sources;

   - current, providing an up to date picture of your provision/s;

   - sufficient to reflect the full range of provision/s; and

   - quantifiable, if using the data to evaluate, for example retention and achievement.

8. When making sound judgements you should consider the following:

   - strengths identified should not just be examples of 'normal' practice but be over and above what is expected as a standard level of service. For example, 'regular participant reviews' would not be a key strength as regular monitoring of progress is expected from all providers. Consistently effective reviews that are meaningful, tailored to individuals needs and have a positive impact on their progress, could be a consideration for a key strength;

   - judgements should be evaluative **not** descriptive. Descriptions of policies/procedures are **not** judgements and say nothing about how effective they are or about the quality of the provision/s; and

- strengths and areas for improvement should be 'key' strengths and 'key' areas for improvement. They must have a significant impact on your participants' experience.

Planning for Improvement

9.   The actions included in the quality improvement plan should aim to:

- bring about improvements for weak aspects identified;

- improve areas identified as satisfactory; and

- build on strengths.